



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1344.8.55.001 - ACT Stats, 2007

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 19/06/2007 Ceased

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Schools, Students and Teaching Staff in the ACT

This article presents data recently released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) about government and non-government schools, students and teachers as at August 2006. Data are presented for the ACT as well as other jurisdictions and Australia as a whole, and some historical comparisons are made with data from 1996.

The data presented were collected through the non-finance National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The article is based on students in the current structure of primary and secondary schools, government, and non-government schools by level, and by year of school education.

ACT schools

At August 2006 there were 139 schools in the ACT. Of these, 68% (95) were government schools and 32% (44) were non-government schools. Since 1996 the number of government schools has decreased by four and the number of non-government schools has increased by four.

ACT schools are classed as either primary, secondary, primary/secondary combined or special schools. In 2006 primary schools accounted for 67% of all schools (93 schools), secondary schools 19% (26 schools) and primary/secondary combined schools accounted for 11% (15 schools). The remaining four schools were special schools.

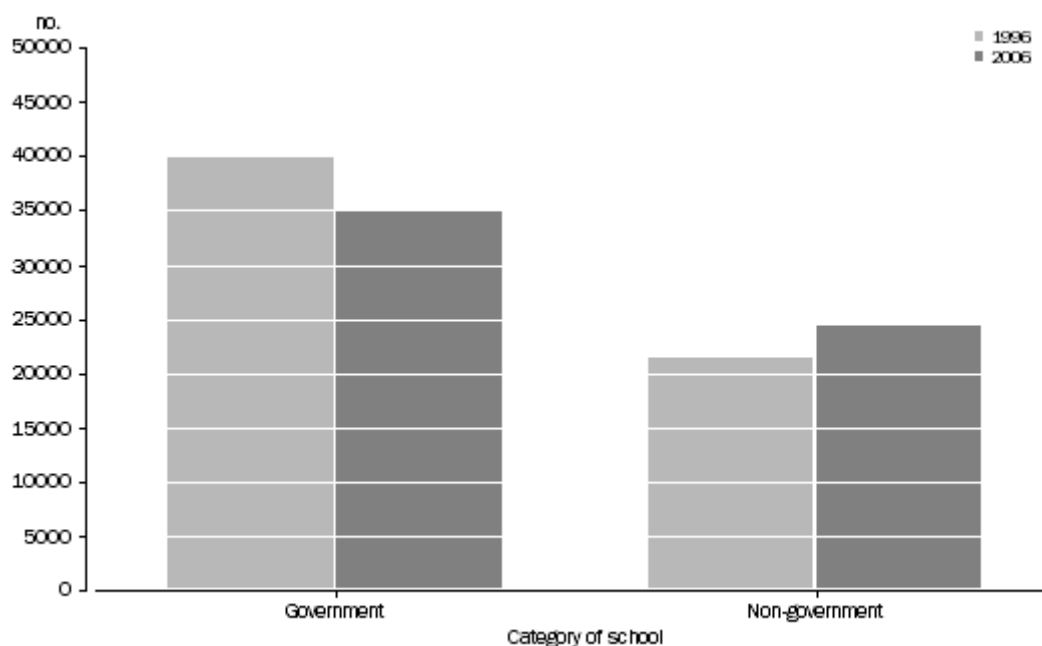
School students

There were 59,769 students enrolled in ACT schools at August 2006. Of these, 59,536 students were enrolled full-time and 233 were enrolled part-time. Full-time government school students accounted for 59% (35,076) of all full-time students.

The number of full-time government school students has decreased by 12.2%, from 39,971 students in 1996. The number of full-time non-government school students increased by 14.3% (21,408 to 24,460) between 1996 and 2006.

Student numbers in each grade varied from a low of 4,254 in pre-year 1 to a high of 4,916 in Year 10. The average number of students per grade in primary school was 4,423 and in secondary school was 4,761. The bigger secondary cohorts are in large part due to the continuing trend of residents from areas surrounding the ACT to send their children to ACT schools for their secondary education.

FULL-TIME STUDENTS, By category of school—ACT—1996 and 2006



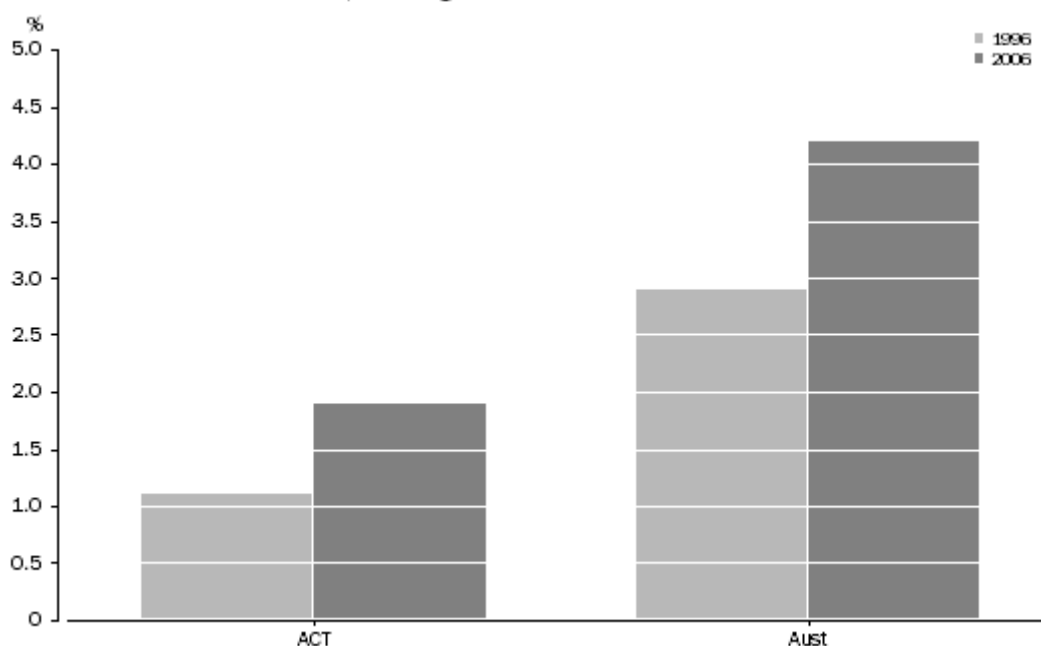
Source: Schools, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4221.0).

Indigenous students

At August 2006, Indigenous (Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin) students accounted for 1.9% of all full-time students in the ACT.

Between 1996 and 2006 the number of full-time enrolled students identified as being of Indigenous origin increased by 60.3% from 703 to 1,127. Nationally, over the same period full-time students identified as being of Indigenous origin increased by 51.5%, from 92,667 to 140,381.

INDIGENOUS FULL-TIME STUDENTS, Percentage of full-time students—ACT and Australia—1996 and 2006



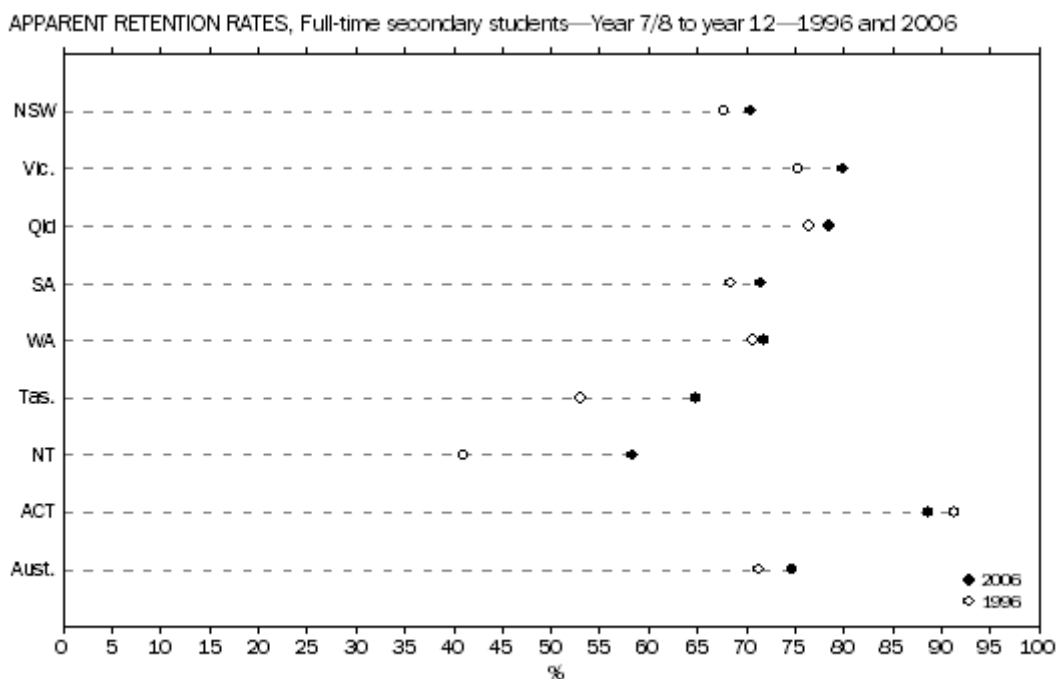
Source: Schools, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4221.0).

Apparent retention rates (See **Definitions** below for calculation of apparent retention rates)

Year 7/8 to year 12

At August 2006, the apparent retention rate of ACT full-time secondary students from year 7/8 to year 12, was the highest recorded (88.7%) amongst all states and territories. This was down 2.6 percentage points from the rate recorded in 1996 (91.3%), when it was also the highest of all the states and territories. In fact, in each of the ten years from 1996 to 2006 the ACT recorded the highest apparent retention rate of all states and territories.

In 2006, the next highest apparent retention rate was recorded by Victoria (79.9%). The lowest apparent retention rate was recorded by the Northern Territory (58.4%). Although the ACT recorded the highest apparent retention rates over the 10 year period, the ACT rate has been trending downward, whereas in the other states and the Northern Territory, it has been rising.



Source: Schools, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4221.0).

Teachers (See **Definitions** below for the definition of teachers)

At August 2006 there were 4,399 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in ACT schools, 13.9% more than in 1996 (3,863 FTE teachers). Nationally, the number of FTE teachers increased by 17.5%, from 203,972 to 239,639, over the same period.

Females accounted for 71% of the FTE teachers in the ACT in 2006, with males accounting for the remaining 29%. This was similar to the composition recorded nationally, where females made up 68% of FTE teachers and males 32%.

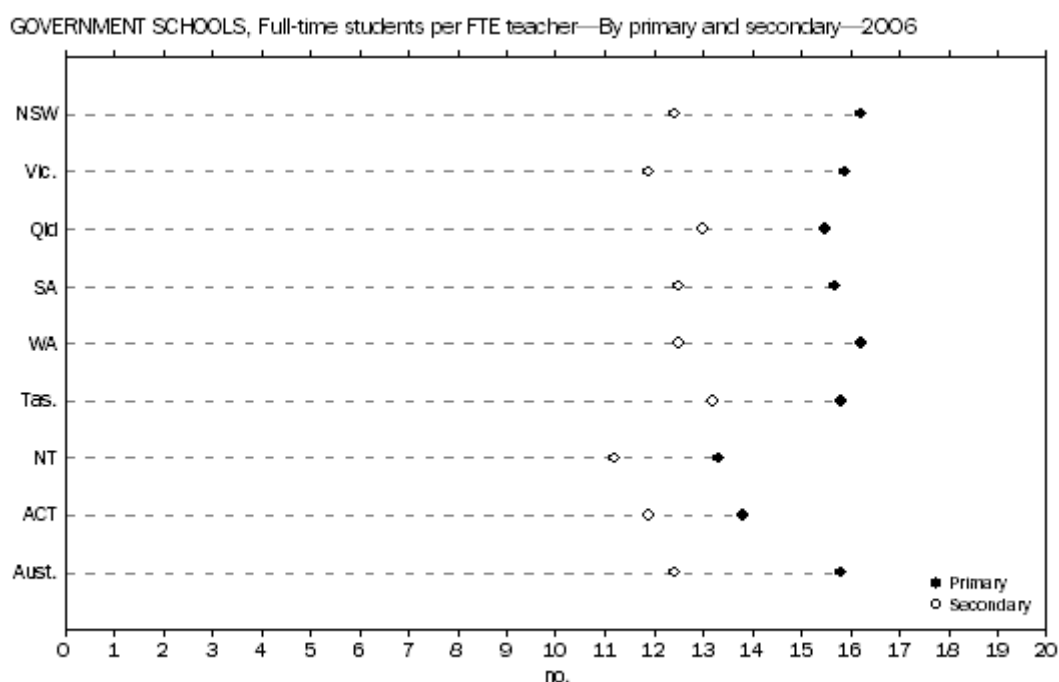
Student/teacher ratios (See **Definitions** below for calculation of student/teacher ratios)

Student/teacher ratios in this section of the article refer to the full-time equivalent (FTE) student/teacher ratios at government and non-government schools, by primary and secondary level.

Government primary schools (See **Definitions** below for a description of student/teacher staff ratios)

At August 2006 the government primary schools student/teacher ratio in the ACT was 13.8 students per FTE teacher, 2.0 less than the national average of 15.8. Government primary schools in New South Wales and Western Australia recorded the highest ratio, at 16.2, whilst the Northern Territory recorded the lowest ratio, at 13.3 students per FTE teacher.

Between 1996 and 2006 government primary schools in the ACT experienced a drop in the student/teacher ratio, from 19.0 students per FTE teacher to 13.8, the largest decrease of all states and territories. Over the same period the ratio recorded nationally also fell, although not by as much (17.8 to 15.8).



Source: Schools, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4221.0).

Government secondary schools

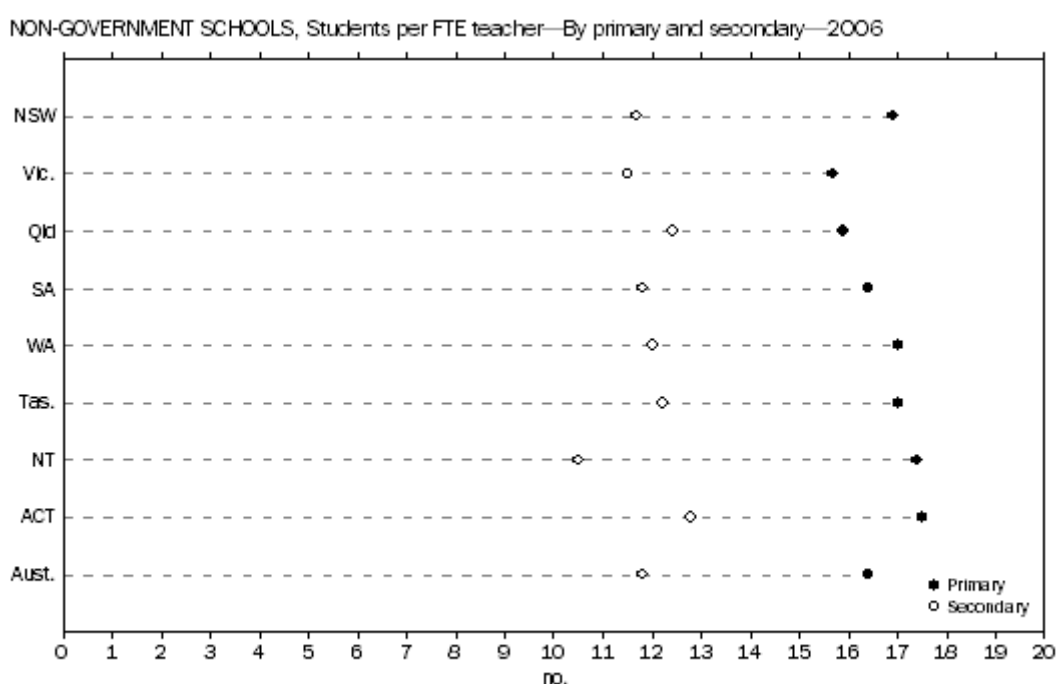
At August 2006, the government secondary school student/teacher ratio in the ACT was 11.9 students per FTE teacher, 0.5 less than the national average of 12.4. All other states and the Northern Territory recorded similar student/teacher ratios, with the highest ratio recorded in Tasmania (13.2), and the lowest recorded in the Northern Territory (11.2).

Over the ten years from 1996 to 2006, government secondary schools in all states and territories except South Australia, recorded a fall in the student/teacher ratio. The ACT recorded the largest fall (0.9 students per FTE teacher) in the ratio, from 12.8 to 11.9.

Non-government primary schools

At August 2006 the ACT non-government primary schools student/teacher ratio was 17.5 students per FTE teacher, 3.7 students more per teacher than ACT government primary schools (13.8), and 1.1 less students per teacher than the national non-government primary school student/teacher ratio of 16.4. Compared with the other states and territories, the ACT had the highest student/teacher staff ratio, and Victoria the lowest, at 15.7.

Between 1996 and 2006 non-government primary schools in all states and territories recorded a fall in the student/teacher ratio. The ACT recorded the largest fall, at 3.2 students per FTE teacher (20.7 to 17.5) and the Northern Territory recorded the smallest fall, of 0.8 students per FTE teacher (18.2 to 17.4).



Source: Schools, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 4221.0).

Non-government secondary schools

Non-government secondary schools in the ACT had 0.9 students per FTE teacher more than government schools in the ACT (12.8 versus 11.9). Compared with the other states and the Northern Territory, non-government secondary schools in the ACT recorded the highest student/teacher ratio, 1.0 above the national average (11.8). The lowest ratio recorded was in the Northern Territory, at 10.5 students per FTE teacher.

The ACT non-government secondary schools student/teacher ratio dropped by 0.8 students per FTE teacher (13.6 to 12.8) over the ten years from 1996 to 2006. This was similar to national trends over the same period (12.8 to 11.8).

DEFINITIONS

Apparent retention rate

The apparent retention rate is calculated by the number of full-time students in year 12 in 2006 divided by the number of full-time students in year 7 (base year), this figure is then converted into a percentage.

Teachers

Teachers are staff who spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They support students by either direct student contact or on an individual basis, and have teaching duties, that is, are engaged to impart school curriculum. For the purposes of the collection, teachers included principals, deputy principals and senior teachers mainly involved in administration. Teacher aides and assistants, and specialist support staff are excluded.

Full-time equivalent (FTE) Student/teacher ratios

Number of full-time students plus full-time equivalent (FTE) of part-time students divided by the same number of FTE teachers.

Ratios are displayed to 1 decimal place.

Further Information:

More information relating to schools, students and teachers in the ACT and Australia can be found in *Schools, Australia* (cat. no. 4221.0). Further information on ACT related statistics can be found on the ABS website www.abs.gov.au.

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